

MONTANA

Department of Commerce

HOUSING DIVISION – HOME PROGRAM

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TO: Persons Interested in the HOME Program

FROM: Maureen Martin, Chief
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DATE: March 19, 2009

SUBJECT: HOME Program Newsletter, Volume 09, Issue 1

HOME Program Newsletters- Important new topics

Copies of the HOME Program newsletters are published on the HOME Happenings web page:

http://housing.mt.gov/Hous_HM_Happenings.asp

New Staff

Mary Taylor and Janet Harper have recently joined the Montana HOME Program team as Program Officers. Mary worked for the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program where she was the Scholarship and Grants Coordinator. Prior to coming to MDOC, she worked at the Montana State Lottery. Mary graduated from MSU-Northern with a bachelor's degree in Business and a minor in Computer Information Systems. Janet has worked at the Office of Consumer Protection and the State Auditor's Office as a compliance specialist and securities analyst. She also worked at the Montana Board of Crime Control where she administered statewide grants. Janet has a bachelor's degree in Political Science and a minor in Criminal Justice from the University of Great Falls.

Income Certification

Using IRS Form 1040 to Determine HOME Income Eligibility

Important Things to Remember:

- If a Form 1040 that was submitted to the IRS for income tax purposes is **less than** 6 months old, the form may be used to determine HOME income eligibility.
- If a Form 1040 that was submitted to the IRS for income tax purposes is **more**



than 6 months old at the time HOME assistance is actually provided, **the applicant must recertify.**

- When using the actual tax return for income certification you must:
 - ✓ Ensure that IRS Form 4506 “Request for Copy of Tax Form” is completed and signed. This form is available at www.irs.gov.
 - ✓ Determine if any of the circumstances as reported on the form have changed or will change in the upcoming 12 months and make adjustments. For example, if the applicant received a raise since the tax return was submitted, the applicant’s **current** income should be used to determine eligibility.
 - ✓ Ensure that everyone in the household is represented through the use of the tax return, including others in the home who may have filed their taxes separately.
- DO NOT use the “sample” IRS Form 1040 (provided in the HOME Program Technical Guide) as documentation to determine income eligibility. Use either an official copy of the IRS Form 1040 document that was submitted to the IRS no more than 6 months ago, or download and complete page 1 of the IRS Form 1040 document available at www.irs.gov.
- In determining Annual (Gross) Income under the HOME Program, (either through Part 5, Census Long Form or IRS Form 1040) **the same income definition must be used consistently** for all HOME program applicants. The same definition does not have to be applied to other separate HOME activities.

New Lead Based Paint Requirements

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently updated the lead based paint (LBP) regulations for housing built before January 1, 1978 and issued a new LBP pamphlet, [Renovate Right: Important Lead Hazard Information for Families, Child Care Providers and Schools](#), effective December 22, 2008. This pamphlet must be provided to any **tenant** or **homeowner** occupying a housing unit built before January 1, 1978 that will be renovated/rehabbed prior to the renovation work commencing. The pamphlet must also be provided to any **homebuyer** purchasing OR any **tenant** renting a housing unit built before January 1, 1978.

Accordingly, the HOME Program has updated the required LBP disclosure statements (**Exhibits 2-T.1, T.2 and T.3, Chapter 2**, Environmental Review, of the HOME Program Administration Manual) that must be signed by renters, homeowners, and homebuyers. The LBP notification items have been noted on the documentation checklists (**Exhibits 3-A.1 thru 3-A.6**) in [Chapter 3](#), Financial Management. Current Grantees need to begin using the updated checklists when submitting set-up reports, payment requests, and/or completion reports. Other information and documents in the HOME Program Administration Manual will be updated in the coming weeks as more guidance from HUD and EPA becomes available.

In addition to requiring the new pamphlet, EPA also issued a [rule requiring the use of lead-safe practices](#) and other actions aimed at preventing lead poisoning. Under the

rule, beginning in April 2010, contractors performing renovation, repair, and painting projects that disturb lead-based paint in homes, child care facilities, and schools built before 1978 must be certified and must follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination. [Training courses](#) have been or are the process of being developed by EPA, in collaboration with HUD, to train renovation, repair, and painting contractors and dust sampling technicians on how to comply with EPA's Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) Rule, and HUD's Lead Safe Housing Rule. If you work with contractors performing any of these tasks, they need to be aware of the RRP Rule and the new training requirements.

[MTHousingSearch.com](#)

Montana's online housing locator service, [MTHousingSearch.com](#), went "live" in July 2008. This online service, sponsored and paid for by the Montana Department of Commerce's Housing Division and Montana Board of Housing, is FREE to rental housing providers listing rental properties and to renters searching for a place to rent.

As a registered property provider, landlords and property managers can manage and update their account 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week via the Internet, or they may call for assistance during office hours M-F, 9-6 EST at 1-877-428-8844. For providers that do not currently have any vacancies, the service is a free way to maintain an inventory of properties. When a vacancy does occur, the property will already be included on the housing locator site and viewable by renters.

The benefits of listing properties on [MTHousingSearch.com](#) include:

- FREE advertising of property
- Ability to describe property's unique features
- Ability to include maps and pictures
- Benefits of a statewide marketing campaign
- Assistance with listing and updating properties from trained staff with a toll-free number
- Makes property managers' jobs easier:
 - **helps to satisfy affirmative marketing obligations**
 - ability to inform potential tenants of your procedures, rules, and requirements before they apply
 - list details about property amenities and special features and post pictures

The HOME Program encourages rental housing providers to use the service and list HOME-assisted properties.